

**[C. H. West]**

[???

FORM A Circumstances of interview

NAME OF WORKER George Hartman ADDRESS 2438 W St., Lincoln, Nebr.

DATE November 30, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore

1. Name and address of informant C. H. West
2. Date and time of interview 1 to 4 a.m.
3. Place of interview 1321 No. 21st
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant None
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

None

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

Visited in Lincoln; comes from Thayer County. [???

FORM B Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER George Hartman ADDRESS 2438 W St., Lincoln, Nebr.

DATE November 30, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT C. H. West Hebroh, Nebraska

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1. Ancestry-English, German
2. Place and date of birth Farm in Illinois, 1860
3. Family
4. Place and date of birth
5. Education, with dates Self-educated.
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates Farmer.
7. Special skills and interests
8. Community and religious activities None
9. Description of informant Tall, lean and sharply chiseled features. White hair, grey eyes.
10. Other points gained in interview

### FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

I came to Nebraska in [1865?]. Father came by stage coach and wagon. There was a party of us that made the trip.

Everything, was new then. There has been an astonishing amount of progress made in Nebraska and to take us back 70 years and see Nebraska we would never believe the tremendous change made.

The soil of Thayer county is very good for the raising of crops and that is why we settled there.

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What we thought mostly of in those days and we didn't have much time to sing unless it was to keep our spirits up and make us feel more courageous.

There was a song once about the "Ship of the Desert" which meant the sails of the prairie schooners going across the plains to settle in this new country. This country was called the "Great American Desert" by some who laughed at people who wanted to settle out here.

The mail that was carried across the country in those days was carried by wagons. The wagons were called "Mud Wagons." There was six mules to pull the wagons and the stations were about 50 miles apart. A driver of one of these mail wagons was a very proud man because it was a highly thought of position. The "whipper up" was the man who whipped the mules to go faster and he rode a horse.

The country in those days looked like an unbroken sea of prairie grass, but soon waves of grain took their place and orchards and forest trees sprung sprung/ up through the settler.

Much trouble was had from the Indians in an early day. The Indians swooped down on many homes, killing the men and capturing the women. The Indians would sack the home and then burn it. The Indians in Thayer county were particularly mean and did much harm. A poem about them went something like this: The painted devils of the plain, Like Centaurs, on their ponies fleet, Carry with them death and pain To innocent people they meet.

Living in this country 70 years ago took much bravery and fortitude if one would count the number of terrible things that happened.

Some of the grasshopper calamities that came seemed like "tall stories" now but the insects after eating everything to eat would eat themselves. There have been storms in Nebraska that don't seem possible now. The storm at Alexandria in 1875 that destroyed everything and hail stones larger than baseballs fell. All of the crops were completely carried away and even the railroad tracks were swept away. The Big Sandy river rose from

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2 feet to 22 feet deep in a few hours. The hail storms killed many cattle and the hail went through buildings smashing them to bits. It was, the most terrible and devastating storm that ever hit a part of Nebraska. And it was only confined to a small area which was a good thing for other citizens of this state[ .?]

In time in the midwest the crops were plentiful especially the crops of apples. The apples were so thick that all of the trees broke down spilling the apples everywhere. The apples were crushed everywhere and soon nothing was left but the juice. The juice turned to cider with a highly alcoholic content. It wasn't long until everything was drunk. The angle worms got 3 drunk flopping all over and it was nothing to see a couple of prairie dogs playing around verydrunkenly. Everybody had plenty to eat that winter because everything was pickled for them.